

# Does Novelty Necessarily Mean Change? New Political Parties within the Polish Party System

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**Abstract:** *The aim of the paper is to assess new political parties in Poland and to examine the question of their perceived novelty and influence on the party system. We employ Barnea and Rahat's analytical framework to evaluate the newness of Polish parties in three party facets: party-in-the-electorate, party-as-organisation, party-in-government. This multi-dimensional analysis allows one to identify those fields in which any novelty may occur. Among the analysed factors is the new parties' electoral base that enables one to assess whether the parties managed to mobilise a new electorate or rather attracted supporters from existing parties instead. Last but not least, we study the changes caused by these parties within the whole party system. In our research we include parties that entered the parliament for the first time after the last two elections: in 2011 and 2015. Before that time the parliamentary scene in Poland seemed to be firmly closed with a nearly constant set of actors. Both in the 2005 and 2007 elections no new parties entered parliament. Hence the 2011 election is considered to be an opening for new parties, but does not necessarily bring about a significant change in the Polish party system in terms of the electoral support for the two largest parties or within patterns of electoral competition.*

**Keywords:** *new political parties, Polish parties, party system change, political change*

## Introduction

The second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has brought about a lot of changes in the more or less institutionalised party systems of both Eastern and Western Europe<sup>1</sup>. The economic crisis of 2008 and the migrant crisis of 2015 have contributed to political instability and uncertainty. The establishment parties in Western Europe have been blamed for not being able to solve these emerging problems, hence disappointed voters have been increasingly willing to support new political groups. These trends are well known in the poorly institutionalised party systems of the post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, where new entities have been brought into parliaments with almost every election. The Polish party system also followed these patterns, till 2001 all subsequent elections enabled new parties to enter the parliament. However, after the radical change that occurred in the early 2000s, the system stabilised in a sense that in two subsequent elections (2005 and 2007) no new parties appeared in the Sejm<sup>2</sup>. It seemed as if the costs of entry were really high (Cox 1997; Hug 2001; Tavits 2006), mainly in terms of the availability of public funding for the incumbent parties. This resulted in a party cartel (Katz – Mair 1995) and severely limited new parties' access to the parliament (Wojtas 2008; Zbieranek 2015). Despite this, in 2011 one party (the Palikot Movement) and in 2015 two other entities (Kukiz'15, the Modern of Ryszard Petru) managed to overcome the entry barrier. It was hardly expected; hence it is worth studying these organisations as well as their impact on the party system. Therefore, the main aim of the article is to address the question as to whether these parties should be perceived as genuinely new or whether they refer to previously existing entities and in which areas. The second aim is to consider whether the appearance of these groupings in the parliament caused has significant changes in the party system.

In our opinion the Polish case is worth attention because of the paradox we observe and which we made as our preliminary assumption i.e. the entry of new parties has not caused meaningful changes in the party system as a whole. After the major shift referred to as 'a hurricane' or 'an earthquake' that occurred in 2001 (Haughton – Deegan-Krause 2015; Casal Bértoa – Guerra 2016) and which paved the way to the new cleavage, the party system seems to be quite stable, with the entrance of new parties making no significant change, especially in terms of the patterns of electoral competition as well as the type of party system. However, it must be admitted that so far only a short-term pattern can be

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1 We can observe this for example in Austria or Germany where the level of support for the two biggest parties has decreased from election to election, but even more so in France and Italy where new political forces (En Marche! and Five Star Movement respectively) were able to beat the traditional parties in parliamentary elections in order to take state power.

2 The lower albeit more influential chamber of the Polish parliament.

observed after the subsequent elections, hence further research on this subject need to be conducted.

Returning to the first goal of the article (considering whether parties that entered the Polish Sejm for the first time in 2011 and 2015 were genuinely new) it is worth emphasising that perceiving parties as new or not depends to a great extent on the theoretical approach adopted by the researcher. Parties sometimes arise as a result of a split, merger or reorganisation in existing parties. They change their labels, programmes, structures, leadership or even electoral base and it is crucial to consider whether this is already the beginning of a new party or simply a change occurring within an existing one; and therein to assess to what extent and in which areas this novelty (if any) occurs. In order to assess newness of the analysed parties, a framework elaborated by Shlomit Barnea and Gideon Rahat (2011) has been used as it best suits the purposes of our article. The concept allows one not only to examine whether a party is new or not, but also to distinguish in which areas it is new and in which should be deemed as a continuation of the possible predecessor. The realisation of the aforementioned aim is perceived as crucial in order to achieve the second goal. The impact the new parties have within the party systems depends to a great extent on the previous assessment concerning party novelty as such. If changes within the party do not bring about the emergence of a genuinely new one, but it is still considered as novelty within the party system, these may create a misconception concerning the change of the party system or cause a mistaken perception as to its instability. Hence, only after proving that the parties that entered the parliament for the first time were genuinely new can we move on to analysing their impact on the system.

As far as the second goal is concerned, the choice of model for party system change is more complicated as the occurring changes are very diverse, so are the models (Flanagan – Dalton 1990: 232). After considering the usefulness of some concepts elaborated below, we decided to base our model for party system change on the classic definition of party system by Giovanni Sartori (2005) composed of two elements (*format* and *mechanics*) and perceive the party system change as modification of these components. Therefore, the party system shift here means the appearance of new relevant parties and/or changing relations between them, mainly in terms of competition patterns.

The article is divided into six parts. In the first, existing approaches and concepts are sketched in order to substantiate the research framework used in the article. First of all, definitions and measurements of party newness are outlined and the contribution of Barnea and Rahat is presented in more detail. There is also an overview of party system change models. Special attention is paid to the definition of party system by Sartori as it is used as a point of departure for the analysis of the Polish case. However, it is not our purpose to provide a thorough review of the literature on new parties and party system change,

but only to draw attention to the diversity occurring in this field and to point to the definitions and research approach that will be used in the article. In the second part, the contemporary Polish political scene at the parliamentary level will be presented in a nutshell. Subsequently, in using this outlined framework the newcomers are analysed in the three dimensions of party activity in which novelty can occur: party-in-the-electorate (third part), party-as-organisation (fourth part) and party-in-government (fifth part). The last and sixth part is entirely devoted to changes in the whole party system in order to assess to what extent the newcomers brought about changes within the Polish party system, particularly in the level of electoral strength of the two leading parties and the patterns of competition. In our research we used various datasets: party statutes and manifestos, data from the National Electoral Commission, national election studies, public opinion polls as well as the official websites of the parties analysed.

## The concepts of party novelty and party system change

As was already suggested in the introduction, the question of party novelty is a complicated one, because the response largely depends on the criteria of newness that have been adopted. In the subject literature are many definitions and measurement tools that bring us closer to the issue of how novelty can be understood. Overall they can be divided into two groups: these perceiving party novelty as a dichotomous variable and helping us to answer unambiguously whether a party is new or not (Harmel 1985; Harmel – Robertson 1985; Bartolini – Mair 1990; Hug 2001; Birch 2003; Sikk 2005; Barnea-Rahat 2011; Hinto 2012; Bolleyer 2013; Mainwaring *et al* 2016), and those regarding it as a non-dichotomous variable and focusing on various aspects of party activity in order to explain in which areas and to what extent a party is new (Barnea, Rahat 2011; Litton 2015; Sikk – Köker 2017). These approaches not only help justify the choice of analysed parties but also assess areas in which they are genuinely new.

### *Newness as a dichotomous variable*

Definitions and tools placed in this group simply enable us to recon what distinguishes a new party from an old one and helps address the question as to whether all the parties that have emerged should be considered new. According to Robert Harmel: ‘New parties are, quite clearly, not all alike’ (1985: 409), he included in his researches all those groupings created in the analysed period that could be identified in available sources regardless of size or electoral strength.<sup>3</sup>

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3 Included in the analysis were 233 new parties formed in 19 West European and Anglo-American democracies from 1960 through 1980.

In the research conducted by him together with John D. Robertson they define a political party as ‘an organisation that purports to have as one of its goals the placement of its avowed members in governmental office’ (Harmel – Robertson 1985: 507). Within the scope of their interests were not only parties created from scratch (‘naturally’), but also by merger, split or the reorganisation of a former party or parties. They included both parties that were created around ‘new issues’ (ecology, devolution, separatism, immigration, religious issues etc.) and those offering an alternative on an ‘old issue’ (mainly the right-left dimension) (Harmel – Robertson 1985: 509).

Narrower definitions encompass mergers and splits only with additional conditions. For example, if the party resulting from the merger has a new name (Birch 2003) or if the party originates from a minor split of an established party (Bolleyer 2013). In the case of a split sometimes the largest successor party is omitted and only the other splinter parties are qualified as new (Mainwaring *et al* 2016). In other definitions, parties are perceived as new if they appoint candidates at a general election to the parliamentary assembly for the first time, including genuinely new parties and splits, but not electoral alliances or parties resulting from mergers (Hug 2001; Kreuzer – Pettai, 2003). In even narrower definitions only parties that do not derive from the existing structures are regarded as new, hence mergers and splits are excluded (Bartolini – Mair 1990). Allan Sikk’s definition excludes from the set of new parties not only all those resulting from splits and mergers, but also those in which there is continuity in terms of political leadership and personnel, a ‘genuinely’ new party changes party politics substantively in contrast to those that are essentially continuations of old parties (2005).

The aforementioned definitions do not constitute a comprehensive overview, because this was not our aim, however they shed light on different approaches to party newness and enable one to define the scope of analysis. The starting point when defining the subject of our research is Simon Hug’s definition (2001), hence we take into consideration parties that were for the first time on the ballot in elections held in the analysed period encompassing the 2011 and 2015 elections, but at the same time we limit the scope of the analysis to parties that managed to overcome the electoral threshold. This is in compliance with the Airo Hinto concept of party ‘emergence’ that refers to the existence of a new party at both the electoral and legislative level. At the electoral level a party must have contested elections and at the legislative one a party must secure at least one seat in parliament to be taken into consideration (2012: 8). There are three such parties in the analysed period, one that entered the parliament after the 2011 election (the Palikot Movement) and two that managed to do the same in 2015 (Kukiz’15, the Modern of Ryszard Petru). This narrowing of the subject of the study will enable us to pursue an in-depth analysis of the particular cases.

## Newness as a non-dichotomous variable

Dichotomous definitions of party newness deliver the criterion (a kind of threshold) that enables one to assign each party to one of two groups and to classify it as simply 'old' or 'new'. However, it is obvious that even if organisations are included within the group of new parties, they can be new in only some dimensions or to some extent, hence a few interesting multi-dimensional frameworks were created that enable the areas and the level of party novelty to be recognised (Barnea – Rahat 2011; Litton 2015; Sikk – Köker 2017). Sikk and Köker's concept is interesting as it allows us to assess both areas and level (extent) of party newness in each of these areas. However, the authors took into consideration only three dimensions (areas) of party activity: organisational structure, party leader change and party candidate selection; excluding, for example, party programmes, which we consider a serious omission. In turn, Litton's conceptualisation of party novelty is a 'thick' one as it encompasses changes in party attributes (name, leaders, programme) as well as organisational changes within parties (structural affiliation). The last one is recorded using eight categories describing various forms of party genesis including *inter alia* splits, mergers, alliances or being created from scratch. In our opinion this framework is useful especially in order to do comparative research based on many cases and electoral cycles as it enables us to compare them over time<sup>4</sup>. All in all, even if this framework is really complex, it does not suit our purposes since, firstly, the scope of our interests involves only three organisations; secondly, we tend to analyse them at the moment of their entrance to the parliament and within the ongoing parliamentary term; and thirdly, the introductory assumption is that all three were created from scratch ('start-up parties', Litton 2015), hence they all belong to the last category distinguished by Litton.

Barnea and Rahat's framework is also comprehensive as it employs as much as eight criteria of party novelty, but it is more suitable to do in-depth research on case studies and does not require longer time perspective, hence it is useful to assess whether the analysed parties should be perceived as genuinely new or they refer to the previously existing groupings and possibly in which areas. It is why we have decided to use this concept in our research starting from presenting it in detail. Barnea and Rahat took as a starting point the well-known concept of parties as 'tripartite systems of interaction' elaborated on by Valdimer O. Key (1942). According to this, a political party is composed of three 'faces': party-in-the-electorate, party-as-organisation and party-in-government. Their contribution consists of taking the concept from the theoretical to the analytical level, proposing criteria of newness referring to these three dimensions

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4 She recorded and mapped 502 cases of party change over four EU electoral cycles from 1989 to 2009 (Litton 2015: 723).



and operationalising them. This results in a checklist to assess the newness of political parties (Table 1).

**Table 1: The analytical framework for measurement of party ‘newness’ by Barnea and Rahat**

Party face	Criterion	Operational definition
Party-in-the-electorate	Party label	Is the name genuinely new or does it contain an ‘old’ party name?
	Ideology	How different is the ‘new’ party platform from the old party/ies platform/s?
	Voters	How different is the ‘new’ party electoral base from the old one?
Party-as-organization	Formal/ legal status	Is the party registered as new?
	Institutions	Were the party institutions separated and differentiated from those of the old party/ies?
	Activists	Does the ‘new’ party have new activists or did they ‘immigrate’ to it from the old party/ies?
Party-in-government	Representatives	Are the top candidates new (non-incumbents)? Did most or all of them come from a single party?
	Policies	How different are ‘new’ party’s policies from the old party/s/ies policies?

Source: Barnea nad Rahat (2010: 306).

In the first aspects, party-in-the electorate, Barnea and Rahat placed three criteria: party label, ideology and voters in order to answer the question as to whether a party under assessment has a name, platform and electoral base that distinguish it from previous parties. The second ‘face’, party-as-organisation, is also connected with three criteria: a formal/legal base, activists and institutions that allow one to evaluate whether a party is registered as new and its institutions and activists that are different from the party sources of the kind belonging to the former party or parties. In the third area, party-in-government, two criteria were employed (representatives and policies) that enable one to assess top party candidates and the party’s policies from the viewpoint of party newness in comparison to a previously existing party or parties. Those eight criteria will serve to analyse three Polish parties in order to consider in which arenas they are genuinely new.

*Some concepts of party system change*

Party system change is one of the most elaborated upon subjects in the literature, hence there are also many concepts attempting to explain different kinds of such shifts. Some of them are tailored for special purposes, others are more universal. After a brief overview of various frameworks (*inter alia* Lipset, Rok-

kan 1967; Wolinetz 1979; Mair 1990), including these related to the new party entry (Cox 1997; Hug 2001; Tavits 2006, 2008; van Biezen – Rashkova 2014; Haughton – Deegan-Krause 2015), the attention is paid to the more general concept of party system by Sartori (2005). It allows us to disaggregate changes occurring in the number of relevant parties (*format*) and in relations between them (*mechanics*) from election to election and does not require long-term perspective, hence it perfectly serves our aim here.

One of the first, now classic, frameworks for explaining party system change revolves around the concepts of alignments and realignments. Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan's cleavage theory (1967) enables us to explain party systems' responses to challenges occurring in their environment, including the emergence of new social issues. As established parties may not be able to pick up new demands and mobilise discontent quickly and credibly enough, new parties can emerge to articulate these issues and concerns (Wolinetz 1979), hence whether new parties appear or not may depend on the established parties' response to the new issue (Flanagan-Dalton 1990: 245). Moreover, as Wolinetz aptly noticed: 'a newly emergent issue that might force a realignment of a two-party system may effect only one or two of the parties in the multi-party system and so the change may be localised to the extent that the party system as a whole is unaffected' (1979: 3). Apart from 'the location of change' Peter Mair pointed to the other parameters of party system change: 'the extent of change' that assesses its significance for the party system as a whole and 'the duration of change' that enables us to assess whether a new party can survive. A party that emerges quickly will also quickly disappear, the more gradual the party system change the more likely the party can adapt (Mair 1990).

Research on new parties focuses largely on the broadly understood cost of their entry. The theory of strategic entry is related to the calculations of political elites about the costs and benefits of entering the electoral arena (Cox 1997). Rules of registering a party and rules that determine winning parliamentary seats (van Biezen – Rashkova 2014) as well as public funding available for parties can also be of great importance (Hug 2001). These should be compared with the potential benefits of holding office. However, what matters are not only the elite-level decisions to enter or not to enter politics but also voter-level decisions to support the newcomers or not (Tavits 2008). Even if the concept of strategic entry is a key to understanding party system stability and change (Tavits 2006: 99), it is rather related to conditions of new parties' emergence, hence it does not address the question of what these entries mean for the whole party system.

In the subject literature one can find the assumption that new parties shall cause political shifts. According to Haughton and Deegan-Krause, party system changes depend to a large extent on the entrance of newcomers and the exit of established parties (2015: 62). In turn, Tavits aptly claims that even without replacing the established parties with new ones, their mere presence has an



impact on electoral competition by driving votes away from existing parties and thus destabilising the electoral arena (Tavits 2006: 99). However, this is not always the case. Firstly, as was already mentioned, new parties can only claim that they are new, but in fact they are a continuation of previously existing which have been rebranded. Secondly, even if newly created parties are genuinely new, their impact on the party system can be limited because of the aforementioned 'location of change' (Wolinetz 1979; Mair 1990). They may simply replace the parties that were newcomers in the previous parliament, but which have ceased to exist after only one parliamentary term. In this way the overall impact of new parties remains at the same level without causing any harm to established parties, their electoral gains and therefore competition patterns. In this case we are dealing with a situation in which a party system is divided into an 'established parties subsystem' and a 'new parties subsystem'. Whereas the changes occur in the second one and new parties replace one another, 'the established parties subsystem' remains unaffected (Haughton – Deegan-Krause 2015).

Following Wolinetz's as well as Haughton and Deegan-Krause's aforementioned claims about a possible lack of impact of new parties on the party system or 'the established parties subsystem', the definition of party system by Sartori is employed to assess the Polish case. A party system encompasses political parties themselves (*format*) and relations between them in terms of competition and cooperation (*mechanics*) (Sartori 2005: 113, 129). The party system shift means that its *format* or *mechanics* or both were changed. The former occurs when new relevant parties (possessing coalition or blackmail potential) have appeared contributing to a more fragmented system. The latter concerns the mode of interaction between relevant parties. It is related to the level of polarisation in the system and to the appearance of a new dimension of party competition (Mair 2000: 30–31). With this concept in mind, the Polish party system and parties which entered the Sejm for the first time after the last two elections in 2011 and 2015 are analysed

## The Polish party system at the time of new parties' entries

It is worth mentioning that since the first democratic election in 1991, the Polish party system has been highly pluralistic, and all subsequent elections enabled new parties to enter the parliament until 2001. Nevertheless, quite clear patterns of party competition occurred with the main cleavage related to the electoral struggle between the post-communist and post-Solidarity parties (Grabowska 2004). The first camp was composed mainly of the Democratic Left Alliance (*Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej*, SLD) and the Polish Peasant Party (*Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe*, PSL), the latter consisted of some post-Solidarity parties that have experienced several splits and mergers. However, in 2001 two new parties entered the parliament: the Civic Platform (*Platforma Obywatelska*, PO) and Law

and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, PiS) and this was such a significant change for the whole party system that it was referred to as an ‘earthquake’. In 2005 the patterns of party competition were changed with the main rivalry line being drawn between these two main post-Solidarity parties: PO and PiS, the first one represents ‘liberal Poland’ or transition winners, the latter ‘social Poland’ or transition losers (Obacz 2018; Casal Bértoa – Guerra 2016).

Both in the 2005 and 2007 elections no new parties entered the Sejm, hence the Polish party system seemed to be firmly stabilised with a near constant set of actors (Stanley, Cześnik 2016). In the parliament of 2007 only four parties were represented, these related to the two dominant cleavages mentioned above: Law and Justice, the Civic Platform, the Democratic Left Alliance and the Polish Peasant Party. Both the electoral system and the party financing system from public sources looked as if they had served to preserve the existing set of parties at parliamentary level. This was to change in 2011, hence the election held then is considered an opening up for new parties. In this year the Palikot Movement (*Twój Ruch*, TR) entered parliament and four years later this party was replaced in the election by two others: Kukiz’15<sup>5</sup> and the Modern of Ryszard Petru (*Nowoczesna Ryszarda Petru*, N).

## The party in the electorate

### *The party label*

According to Barnea and Rahat’s criterion of party label, a party to be considered new must have a new name which clearly differentiates it from previous (existing) parties. In all three cases discussed here that condition was fulfilled. All three parties were started from scratch, in all three cases the name of the organisation included the surname of its founder. The Palikot Movement (*Ruch Palikota*) was established by former PO deputy and businessman, wine and vodka producer, Janusz Palikot. His party was registered in June 2011, and under this name it contested the election in October 2011, when it obtained 10.2% of the vote and 40 seats in the Sejm (PKW 2011). Later on in 2013, it was renamed Your Movement (*Twój Ruch*). The party also took part in the 2015 parliamentary election as part of a broader coalition: the United Left (*Zjednoczona Lewica*); however, it was not able to reach the electoral threshold and found itself outside of parliament.

Kukiz’15 was created by the well-known rock-musician Paweł Kukiz and took part in the elections of 2015 as an Electoral Committee of Voters (a legal form of electoral participation in Poland, designed for groups and individuals who are not part of any political parties), obtaining 8.81% of the vote and 42

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5 Kukiz’15 is not formally registered as a political party; however, it fulfils the functions ascribed to parties, hence we have decided to include it in our research.

seats in the Sejm (PKW 2015). The official name of Kukiz'15 is the Association for the New Constitution Kukiz'15 (*Stowarzyszenie na Rzecz Nowej Konstytucji Kukiz'15*), which is fully original. The Modern of Ryszard Petru (*Nowoczesna Ryszarda Petru*) was established by the economist Ryszard Petru and registered in August 2015. In the election held in October of the same year it gained the support of 7.6% of voters and 28 seats (PKW 2015). The name of the party can also be treated as new, because neither of its two elements were previously used by any other political party. In 2017 the party was renamed the Modern (*Nowoczesna*), dropping the name of its founder, Ryszard Petru.

## Party ideology

Moving on to the issue of ideology it must be underlined that the analysed parties are not split or mergers, hence there are no specific party programmes (e.g., of their predecessors) to which their platform could be compared. Taking this into consideration we have simply analysed their programmes looking for criticism of the existing solutions and for suggestions of changes in order to identify whether their propositions make any difference for the political stances represented by the existing parliamentary parties. The Palikot Movement's proposals are studied on the basis of the party programme 'A Modern State. A Secular State. A Friendly State' (Ruch Palikota 2011a), the parliamentary election programme of 2011 (Ruch Palikota 2011 b), as well as the draft 'A plan for changes 2014–2019' (Twój Ruch 2014). The main principles of the Modern of Ryszard Petru can be found in 'Programme directions' adopted in 2015 before the parliamentary election (Nowoczesna 2015) and especially in the 'Programme Modern Poland for everyone', approved a year later (Nowoczesna 2016). The analysis of Kukiz'15 is based on the only programme this association adopted in 2015: 'A Strategy for Changes. You can do it Poland! Kukiz'15' (Kukiz 2015).

The programmatic stances of the parties differ significantly between the Palikot Movement and the Modern of Ryszard Petru on the one hand and Kukiz'15 on the other. When considering economic issues, the first two should be positioned as making a commitment to liberal values. In the socio-cultural dimension characterised by the GAL – TAN division (ecological, alternative and libertarian *versus* traditional, authoritarian and nationalist values) both parties should be placed definitely on the side of the former (Stanley – Czesnik 2014: 707; Casal Bértoa – Guerra 2016: 233). Kukiz'15 is dissimilar in both dimensions, it tends to combine conservative principles in the social-cultural dimension with an economic nationalism that claims the economy should serve the nation (Markowski 2016). Comparing the party programmes we have noticed that even though their position on many issues differs significantly, what they have in common is disapproval towards the situation contemporary Poland is in.

The main area of criticism is related to the political establishment and mainstream parties as well as the inappropriate functioning of state institutions, which are perceived as repressive towards citizens. The lack of transparency in the decision-making process and public finances is condemned as well. All parties point to an ailing legislative process, excessive bureaucracy and the inept functioning of the court system as matters that should be fixed. Kukiz'15 points to corruption and nepotism as being among the most important problems, whereas for the Palikot Movement and the Modern of Ryszard Petru it is the reduction in economic freedom and the privileged position enjoyed by the Catholic Church within public life.

The analysed parties have not limited themselves to mere critique, as they also have proposed some solutions for how to fix the existing problems. First of all, they are for a reform of the electoral system that should serve citizens (not parties) and advocate the abolishment of party financing from public state sources. Whereas the latter is important for all three parties, the former is a key matter for Kukiz'15 as this formation was created around the issue of single member districts to be introduced in Poland. They all aim at simplifying the tax system and the reduction of the national budget deficit. Their solution for improving the court system is to speed up court cases and to change the career path of judges, so that judicial appointments are granted to persons with professional and life experience and constitute the culmination of a legal career rather than its beginning. The Palikot Movement and Kukiz'15 are for an increase in the use of direct democracy, especially by using referendum as well as including citizens in the candidate selection process before public elections, something they tried to do starting with themselves (see below).

Moreover, the Palikot Movement and the Modern of Ryszard Petru postulate deregulation of the economy emphasising the need for competition as well as underlining the equality of women and men throughout public life. For both parties Poland's European integration is of great importance. They also agree that the privileged position of the Catholic Church in the public sphere should be reduced. Kukiz'15 is much more sceptical about European integration and more positively evaluates the engagement of the Church.

Potential similarities in these programmes to the platforms of existing parties could be found in the case of the Palikot Movement and the Modern of Ryszard Petru, as both have had something in common with the Civic Platform (PO). The leader of the former, Janusz Palikot, was an MP of this party and as such ran the parliamentary committee 'Friendly state'. It must be admitted that some concepts that arose there were then to be continued by the new party; however, they should be considered to be more Palikot's own projects than ideas of the PO. These two parties are close to each other on the Polish political spectrum; however, the Palikot Movement cannot be considered a formation that emulates the PO platform (Stanley – Czesnik 2016: 708).

In turn, the Modern of Ryszard Petru has sometimes been called ‘the Civic Platform bis’ by the media because of its liberal stance and because in the 1990s its leader Ryszard Petru was connected with the political milieu from which the Civic Platform partially arose. It is true that Ryszard Petru openly declared that his target was former, disenchanted voters of this party (Dąbrowska 2015). However, at the same time the Modern of Ryszard Petru was supposed to be a clear alternative to PO. This intention was visible in the above-mentioned postulates for changes in the political system which were completely absent from the PO programme in 2015 and which can be interpreted as characteristic for the challenger party. The demands for more economic freedom or deregulation in the many spheres of the economy were much more radical than the economic propositions of the Civic Platform. In the electoral campaign before the parliamentary election in 2015, the candidates of the Modern of Ryszard Petru emphasised the ‘unfulfilled promises’ of PO such as tax reductions, privatisation and improvement in the functioning of the courts (Nowoczesna prezentuje 2015). All those demands were presented by the new party to be in contrast to PO.

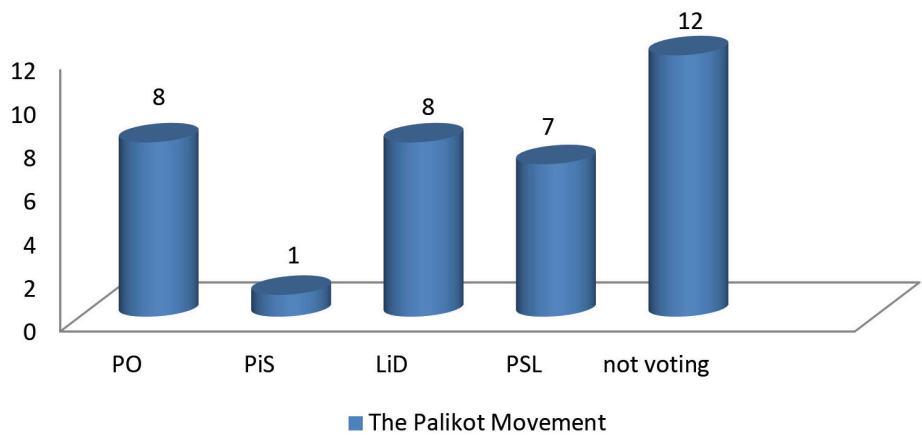
### *The party voters*

In the analysis of the electorate of the discussed parties, we would like to draw attention to those voters who either switched their votes or declared they had not voted in the previous election. In the figures below we have used the data from public opinion surveys conducted by CBOS, and we have focused on the declarations made by those voters who in previous elections had voted for other parties and then switched their votes respectively in favour of the Palikot Movement (in 2011), Kukiz’15 and the Modern of Ryszard Petru (in 2015). We particularly consider the four parties which belonged to the political mainstream in the 2007–2011 and 2011–2015 parliamentary terms: the Civic Platform (PO), Law and Justice (PiS), the Polish Peasant Party (PSL) and the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD). In 2007 this was the electoral coalition Left and Democrats (*Lewica i Demokraci*, LiD), which was formed by SLD and the Democratic Party-demokraci.pl (*Partia Demokratyczna-demokraci.pl*, PD).

In 2011, the Palikot Movement was able to attract more or less similar numbers of voters from the three mainstream parties as were voted for in 2007: PO (8%), PSL (7%) and the leftist LiD (8%), with the smallest group being former supporters of PiS (1%). However, taking into account the size of the electorate of each party in absolute numbers, it is worth mentioning that those 8% of former PO voters who supported the Palikot Movement, formed 43% of the whole electorate of the said election (Cybulska 2011:6). Also worth emphasising is the figure which illustrates those supporters of the Palikot Movement who did not vote in 2007. Out of the whole group of non-voters in 2007, 12% decided to

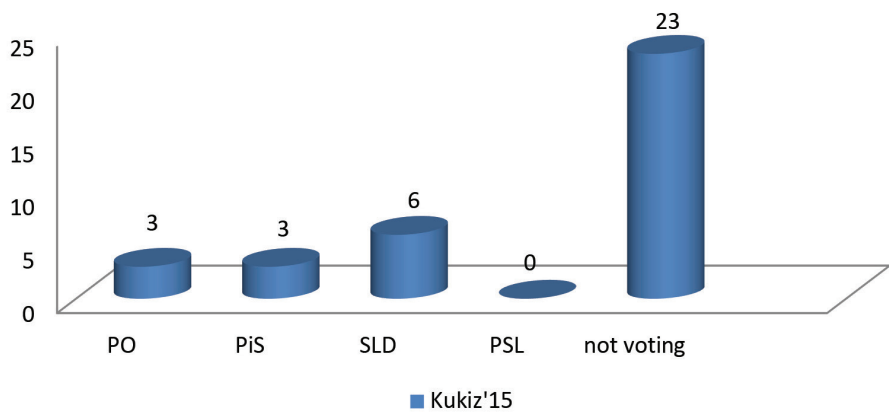
support this party in 2011. This may be interpreted as the potential to mobilise new voters, particularly if we take into account that (as is shown by another set of data) 24% of the youngest voters, who had not been eligible to vote in 2007, decided in 2011 to support the Palikot Movement (Cybulska 2011:7).

**Figure 1: Voters of the Palikot Movement (%) in 2011 who in the previous election voted for the other parties**



Source: Developed by the authors on: Cybulska, Agnieszka (2011): Wierność wyborcza-przeptywy między elektoratami partyjnymi z roku 2007 i 2011, Warszawa: CBOS, Komunikat z Badań BS 151/2011.

**Figure 2: Voters of Kukiz'15 (%) in 2015 who in the previous election voted for the other parties**

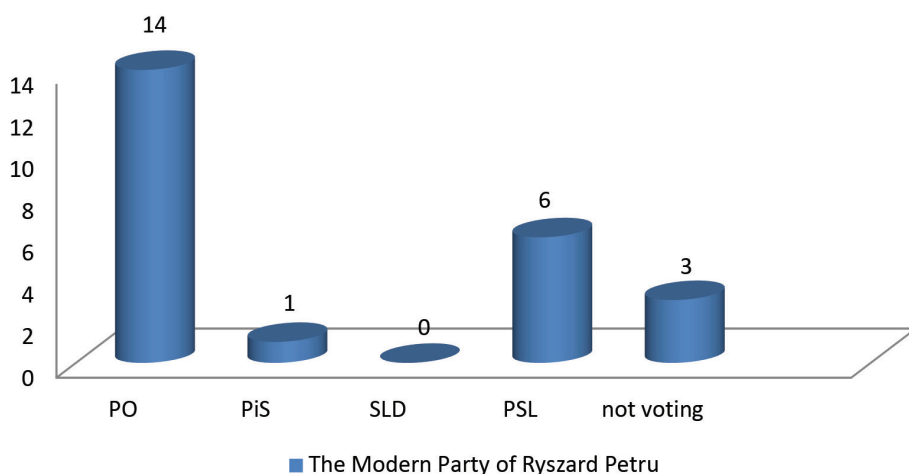


Source: Developed by the authors on: Cybulska, Agnieszka (2015): Przeptywy elektoratów w wyborach parlamentarnych 2011–2015, Warszawa: CBOS, Komunikat z Badań No 166/2015.



Figure 2 shows that Kukiz'15 was able to attract a really large group of people who declared themselves non-voters in the election of 2011. Taking into account the rather conservative profile of this formation, the decision by 6% of former voters for the leftist SLD to switch their votes may seem surprising. Similar groups of former supporters of PO and PiS (3%) decided to switch vote in favour of Kukiz'15, however it is important to note that no previous voters of PSL decided to back Kukiz'15 in the 2015 elections.

**Figure 3: Voters of the Modern Party of Ryszard Petru (%) in 2015 who in the previous election voted for other parties**



Source: Developed by the authors on: Cybulska, Agnieszka (2015): *Przełupyw elektoratów w wyborach parlamentarnych 2011–2015*, Warszawa: CBOS, Komunikat z Badań No 166/2015.

In the case of the Modern of Ryszard Petru it is significant that the biggest group of switched votes came from former PO supporters (14%). It is also important to note the absence of any former leftist voters of SLD. The Modern of Ryszard Petru was able to attract quite a significant group of switched voters from PSL (6%), yet far fewer from PiS (1%). Taking into account the fact that it was a new party, the small group of former non-voters (3%) may be surprising; however, the figures showing notable numbers of former PO supporters may induce one into thinking that the Modern of Ryszard Petru was more attractive for disillusioned voters than for those who had not been mobilised to vote in previous elections.

In our opinion it may be also worth observing the voting decisions of the youngest group of voters, because in the case of the two new parties analysed here (i.e. the Palikot Movement and Kukiz'15) their ability to mobilise those

voters was strongly emphasised (Marzęcki – Stach 2013, Roguska 2017).<sup>6</sup> In 2011 the most popular party among voters in the 18–24 age group was the Civic Platform, which gained 36% of their support. Law and Justice obtained 24%, the Palikot Movement 20%, the Polish Peasant Party 6%, while the Democratic Left Alliance got 5% (Hipsz 2011). In the case of 2015 we have data encompassing a broader group of youth, namely people from 18–29. Law and Justice gained 26.6% support, Kukiz’15 received 20.6 % of their vote, the Civic Platform 14.4%, the Modern of Ryszard Petru 7.8%, the Polish Peasant Party 3.7%, and the United Left, which was a coalition of various leftist parties and organisations, including SLD and Your Movement, got 3.4% (Wiadomości.wp.pl 2015). As to the other socio-demographic characteristics of the electorate in the case of Palikot Movement more than average religious indifference was emphasised (Pankowski 2011). Except for their young age, supporters of Kukiz’15, were not significantly different from those of the other parties (Roguska 2017:3). The one important element which made them outstanding was their very critical opinion of Polish politics and the Polish government which was in office at the time of the 2015 elections (Roguska 2017:6). In the case of the Modern of Ryszard Petru the research shows that among their supporters the groups that may be distinguished were people with a higher education, and those living in cities with over 500 000 inhabitants. Conversely it was least popular among inhabitants of villages and voters with a primary education (Głowacki 2017:3).<sup>7</sup>

Summarising data concerning switched votes one can say that two parties, the Palikot Movement and Kukiz’15, were able to mobilise fairly significant groups of voters who might be described as a new electoral base in the sense that those were the voters who had not previously engaged with any defined political force. The matter seems different in the case of the Modern of Ryszard Petru, which might be perceived as the voter choice of those disillusioned with the Civic Platform. For two out of the three parties analysed here (i.e. Palikot Movement and Kukiz’15) the young age of the supporters was strongly emphasised, partly because among those voters the biggest group of previous non-voters can be found. As to the other socio-demographic characteristics, the new parties analysed here did not significantly differ from the other Polish mainstream parties.

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6 We focus on the four mainstream parties and three new parties analysed in this paper.

7 More detailed socio-demographic characteristics of the voters of all parties in 2015 can be found in Wyniki wyborów (2015).

## The party as organisation

### *The legal status*

All three organisations discussed here started with the formal status of an association. Firstly, because they programmatically criticised the existing parties and wanted to present themselves as alternative forms of political activity. Secondly, because in Poland there are *strict* rules concerning party financing and it is much easier for associations rather than for parties to collect money from individuals (Wojtasik 2012: 167). Nevertheless, in order to be entitled to state subsidies any formation has to be registered as a political party according to the rules set down by the Party Law of 1997 and obtain at least 3 % of the vote, or 6 % in the case of party coalitions (Party Law 1997). The other important difference is the possibility to run in elections. The right to present electoral lists in Poland belongs to electoral committees, which may be created by political parties and voters (Electoral Code 2011). Thus the association willing to run in elections should register its lists as electoral committee of voters. Two of the three analysed entities, the Palikot Movement and the Modern of Ryszard Petru, – decided to register themselves formally as political parties before the first election in which they took part, in 2011 and 2015 respectively, whereas Kukiz'15 has kept the status of an association. In this way it has emphasised its criticism towards the political parties as political institutions that ‘cheat people’ (Kukiz 2015) instead of representing them.

From the view point of Barnea and Rahat's criteria it is important to analyse whether the parties were registered as new ones. In Poland this can be easily verified in the ‘Register of political parties’ kept by the District Court in Warsaw. When a new party is created, the Court allocates it the next number in the register; however, when an existing party changes its name, it is entered in the register under the same number.<sup>8</sup> In 2011, the Palikot Movement was placed in the register under the new number EwP 313 and when this party changed its name to Your Movement in 2013 it retained the same number. So, regarding its legal status the Palikot Movement was a new party and Your Movement its continuation.<sup>9</sup> It's the same case for the Modern of Ryszard Petru, which was

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8 For example there is the Union of European Democrats (*Unia Europejskich Demokratów*) entered under number 12. Initially there was the Democratic Union (*Unia Demokratyczna*), then the Union for Freedom (*Unia Wolności*) and the Democratic Party-democrats.pl (*Partia Demokratyczna-demokraci.pl*), hence from the formal viewpoint these parties can be considered a continuation of the same formation (Register 2019).

9 However, to be completely *strict* it is necessary to notice that Janusz Palikot's first party (the Movement for Support, *Ruch Poparcia*) had already been established in autumn 2010 and registered under the number EwP 306. The party had not submitted its financial report for 2010 that should have been delivered to the State Electoral Committee before the end of March 2011, hence it was running the risk of being crossed off the register. Taking into consideration the upcoming parliamentary election in autumn 2011, Janusz Palikot immediately decided to establish a new party, the Palikot Movement

introduced into the register under the new number EwP 362 in 2015. When its founder and leader Ryszard Petru left in 2018, his name was removed from the formation label, but the party retained the same number, something that should be considered a continuation in the legal sense (Register 2019). All in all, as far as formal status is concerned, both the Palikot Movement and the Modern of Ryszard Petru were registered as genuinely new parties. Kuiz'15 has never applied for the status of a political party, hence it exists beyond the register. However, it should also be regarded as a new entity functioning in the form of an association.

### *The party institutions*

With minor differences mostly concerning the number of organs, each discussed subject has a central decision-making body, which is a collective organ composed of delegates of the lower structures. Each have executive bodies, usually encompassing a collective and single-person one, the leader of the party (Statut Kukiz'15 2015; Statut Nowoczesnej 2017; Statut RP 2011). Such a structure is usually emulated at lower levels, with differences visible in the number and character of the levels themselves. A very important change in the Statute of Your Movement concerning the party institutions occurred in 2015: this being the introduction of two co-leaders instead of one, and that these posts had to be filled by a man and a woman in accordance with the party postulate on gender equality (Statut TR 2015). In all three cases the party institutions may be considered to be new, because neither of the analysed entities had any party predecessor which could have served as an institutional base.

### *The party activists and candidates*

In each case the structures, particularly the basic ones gathering grass-roots members, were built gradually. This took some time and, particularly in the cases of Kukiz'15 and the Palikot Movement, was not fully successful in terms of a structural representation over the entire territory of Poland (Twój Ruch 2016; Kukiz 2016). As a result of all three formations being organised shortly before elections, the most important task concerning the mobilisation of activists was the construction of candidate lists. Each organisation declared its aim to base these lists on new people, ones without previous engagement in politics and particularly in other parties. As one of the activists of the Modern of Ryszard Petru put it: they did not want to attract 'party hoppers'. So the party based its strategy of looking for worthwhile candidates on the activity of local coordinators, whose task was also the building of the local party structures

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analysed in this article. The Movement of Support is treated very much as a kind of false start (Ruch Poparcia 2017: 517)

(Nyczka 2015; Deja 2015). Kukiz'15 turned to the Internet as a tool to recruit candidates without previous political ties, which was widely commented on in the media (wyborcza.pl 2015). The Palikot Movement used local coordinators but also encouraged those willing to run in elections to send e-mails to the party office (Gazeta.pl 2011).

However, in all three cases the final result (i.e., the pool of candidates) included persons with some previous political engagement. In the case of the Palikot Movement a group of candidates came from another party, the Reason of the Polish Left (*Racja Polskiej Lewicy*). Additionally, single members came from the Democratic Party-democrats.pl (*Partia Demokratyczna–demokraci.pl*), the Polish Peasant Party (*Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe*) and the Democratic Left Alliance (*Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej*) (Kandydaci Ruchu Palikota 2013: 311–332). Some candidates were activists of NGOs connected with the LGBT movement or the initiative Free Hemp and the Campaign Against Homophobia.

In the case of Kukiz'15 some candidates had been previously active or at the time of the election were still active in various structures, including small political parties. The most notable group (about 30 people on all the lists registered by Kukiz'15) were members of the National Movement (*Ruch Narodowy*), a kind of umbrella organisation for nationalist activists, which in February 2015 was registered as a political party. The second largest group were members of the Congress of the New Right (*Kongres Nowej Prawicy*), a party which had also registered its own lists (PKW 2015). Those two groups provided individual top candidates who won parliamentary seats, only one of whom having once been a deputy in the European Parliament (Sylwester Chruszcz Biografia 2019). Among Kukiz'15 candidates there were also members of several other parties such as the Libertarian Party (*Partia Libertariańska*), the Union of Real Politics (*Unia Polityki Realnej*) or Direct Democracy (*Demokracja Bezpośrednia*). However, all of those candidates, except for one, failed to enter parliament. It is worth mentioning that among candidates advanced by Kukiz'15 were also activists engaged in promoting Single Mandate Districts, the flagship postulate of Paweł Kukiz both as a presidential candidate and in his earlier political activity. There were also persons connected with the conservative KoLiber Association (*Stowarzyszenie KoLiber*) and the Republican Foundation (*Fundacja Republikańska*).

The Modern of Ryszard Petru also attracted some people who had previously been connected with political or social activity. Some of them were former members of the Democratic Union (*Unia Demokratyczna*, UD) or its successor, the Union for Freedom (*Unia Wolności*, UW) including Ryszard Petru himself (Ryszard Petru. Biografia 2018). However, most of them were no longer members of any party. The lists of the Modern included mostly candidates who declared no partisan affiliation, except in a few cases where affiliation with the Modern itself was declared (PKW 2015).

## The party in government

### *The party representatives*

Taking into account the third area of party activity distinguished by Valdimer O. Key (1942) ‘party in government’, Barnea and Rahat have pointed to the two criteria that help to measure party novelty: party representatives in government institutions and party policy. The former relates to the share of non-incumbent representatives, incumbent representatives originating from the same party and incumbent representatives coming from various parties (Barnea-Rahat 2011: 308). Analysis of the candidate lists and the parliamentary representations of the Palikot Movement in 2011 and the Modern of Ryszard Petru and Kukiz’15 in the 2015 election has proven that there were mainly non-incumbent candidates and representatives. Even if it has been shown above that in the candidate selection process some political milieus were engaged, it is important to highlight that the candidates were overwhelmingly new in a sense that they were not MPs and had not even served as candidates in the previous parliamentary election. The parties and the organisations (mentioned in the previous point) that co-created the candidate lists were mostly small, often niche formations, or parties that had already had their best years while the candidates were not foreground politicians.

The detailed comparison of parliamentary representations of the analysed formations has shown that almost all the MPs were new. After Palikot Movement entered the Sejm in 2011 only one out of its 40 MPs was an incumbent representative that had held a parliamentary mandate in the previous term of office, Janusz Palikot himself, who had been an MP of the Civic Platform (PKW 2007, PKW 2011). As far as Kukiz’15 and the Modern Party are concerned, all 42 MPs of the former and all 28 MPs of the latter that were elected to parliament following the 2015 election were new; none of them had been an MP in the previous parliamentary term (PKW 2011, PKW 2015). The novelty was visible within the pool of top party candidates as well. The results of research conducted by Allan Sikk and Philipp Köker have shown that the level of the weighted candidate novelty (WCN ranks from 0 – no new candidates to 1 – all candidates are new) in all three parties allows one to consign them to the group of highly new formations, where the WCN is greater than or equal to 0.75. Palikot Movement’s WCN index value is 0.95, Kukiz’15 it’s 0.91 and for the Modern of Ryszard Petru the value of the WCN is the highest – 0.97 (Sikk – Köker 2018: 19).<sup>10</sup> On the whole, all three formations are extremely new in the area of party representatives.

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<sup>10</sup> Full details on calculating the WCN index can be found in Sikk – Köker (2017 b: 27).



## *Party policies*

The second criterion in the area ‘party in government’ is that of party policy. It involves a comparison of party policies to its own previous policies (in order to identify a continuation or a change) and to the policies of other parties. However, none of the analysed parties has ever been in government, hence they were not able to put their programmes into practice, therefore it is impossible to produce any comparison of this kind. The only issue that can be considered here is their parliamentary activity. As oppositional parties they should not be expected to be able to influence governmental policies in this way. However, the parliamentary arena may also be used as a channel to formulate some political propositions using the legislative initiative. Elsewhere we have analysed speeches and legislative initiatives of two out of the three parties discussed here (i.e. Palikot’s Movement and Kukiz’15) and we found that their MPs advanced legislative initiatives which were in compliance with party programmes (Kosowska-Gąstoł, Sobolewska-Myślik 2018). Some of those initiatives concerned the flagship proposals of the reforms which those parties perceived as necessary in the Polish political system and were also mentioned above in the analysis of party ideology, such as the reform of the electoral system or the abolishment of the party financing from state resources. Most of these initiatives were rejected at the introductory stage of legislative work or even before this was commenced and only a few acts were adopted following the initiatives of the formations. However, because the legislative initiatives cannot be equalised with the government policies, we do not elaborate those problems further.

## **The changes in the Polish party system**

### *New parties as permanent elements of the Polish party system?*

As was already mentioned in the introduction, the Polish party system at the parliamentary level seemed to be stable after the 2005 and 2007 elections in a sense that no new parties had entered the Sejm. In 2011 the Palikot Movement crossed the electoral threshold and after the 2015 election Kukiz’15 and the Modern of Ryszard Petru also managed to enter parliament. However, these parties do not seem to be lasting elements of the party system. This is due to their weak institutionalisation (with the meaning of Panebianco 1988; Harmel – Svåsand 1993) and the strong position of the party leader who treats the party as his ‘personal vehicle’, something (Lucardi 2000) that is surely not conducive to party institutionalisation.

Despite some efforts to develop organisational structures after the 2011 election, the Palikot Movement did not succeed in establishing them in the country as a whole, it was also not able to keep its MPs’ and voters’ loyalty long

enough to enter parliament in 2015. Deputies who were offended by the way of its leader's party managing, left the formation one by one. Needless to say, while at the beginning of the term of parliamentary office the party occupied 40 seats, at the end it had only 11 MPs. Some of them decided to be non-affiliated MPs, some joined the Democratic Left Alliance, others created their own parliamentary circles. One of them was called the Dialogue Initiative (Inicjatywa Dialogu 2013), however their members finally decided to join the Polish Peasant Party. The second, the Red and White Circle (*Koło Biało-Czerwoni*), survived to the end of the parliamentary term (PKW 2011; Koła i kluby 2015). The defeat of 2015 meant that even if the party still exists, it is no longer active and its founder has announced his withdrawal from politics.

Kukiz'15 and the Modern are still present in Polish parliament, however both are getting weaker in terms of organisation and supporters' loyalty. Throughout the whole period of time which had elapsed since the beginning of the parliamentary term in 2015, the number of Kukiz'15 representatives decreased from 42 to 26. Some MPs stepped out of its parliamentary group creating two separate circles, Free and Supportive (*Wolni i Solidarni*) and Freedom and Effective (*Wolność i Skuteczni*), some decided to become non-affiliated MPs (PKW 2015; Koła i kluby 2019). The same is with the Modern of Ryszard Petru that in 2015 election won 28 parliamentary seats, but currently has only 15 MPs. There was division in the party in May 2018 as its founder Ryszard Petru, after his defeat in an internal election process for party leader, decided to leave the formation with two other MPs and they created a new party 'Now' (*Teraz*) and the parliamentary circle under the same name. Some other MPs decided to join the Civic Platform parliamentary group or became non-affiliated (PKW 2015; Koła i kluby 2019).

In December 2018, about 5% of voters declared support for Kukiz'15 and 2% for the Modern Party (Pankowski 2018: 4). With the elections to be held in 2019 it seems really questionable as to whether those two parties will be able to stay in parliament and serve as relevant actors in Polish politics. However, even if these parties disappeared from the Sejm, their place could be taken by other formations. Currently the mass media inform about two initiatives that can be important during the EP election in May 2019 and the parliamentary election in the autumn of this year.

One was created by the leftist politician Robert Biedroń, a former deputy of the Palikot Movement, then the highly popular mayor of the city of Słupsk. He openly declared himself to be homosexual, something rather unusual in Polish politics. In 2018 Biedroń started a kind of social movement, crossing the country, meeting people and discussing issues that are important for them. This action under the slogan 'Brain storm' aims at creating a programme for a new formation (Kalukin 2018). Its purpose is to oppose the existing political elites and to become an alternative to PiS and PO. A new party was established in February 2019 and only then was its name revealed (*Partia Roberta Biedronia*

2018), ‘Spring’. The second initiative comes from the opposite side of the political spectrum, the founder and owner of the Catholic station ‘Radio Maryja’, the priest Father Tadeusz Rydzyk, who hitherto supported PiS. Formally the True Europe Movement was established by the MEP Mirosław Piotrowski, who applied for its registration as a political party. However, he has not had any of his own political backing and as a close collaborator of Father Rydzyk can surely count on his support, which could cause a decrease in the PiS electorate (Nowa partia Rydzyka 2018).

All in all, it must be admitted that the new parties in Polish parliament seem to be labile formations. As was discussed above, the Palikot Movement was the first new party able to enter Polish parliament after two terms of stability; it was supposed to express protest against the existing parties and to create a new quality in the Polish party system. After only one term, it was replaced by two other new parties expressing almost the same ideas. Both quickly lost their supporters and their MPs are leaving them, creating even newer groups, which so far have not passed the electoral test. Their chances of becoming relevant after the upcoming election appear slight. However, outside parliament other formations have been established that criticise the mainstream parties, present themselves as an alternative and can replace the hitherto new parties in the Sejm. Therefore, it looks as if new parties have become a permanent element of the Polish party system in the sense that new entities enter and exit the parliament one by one.

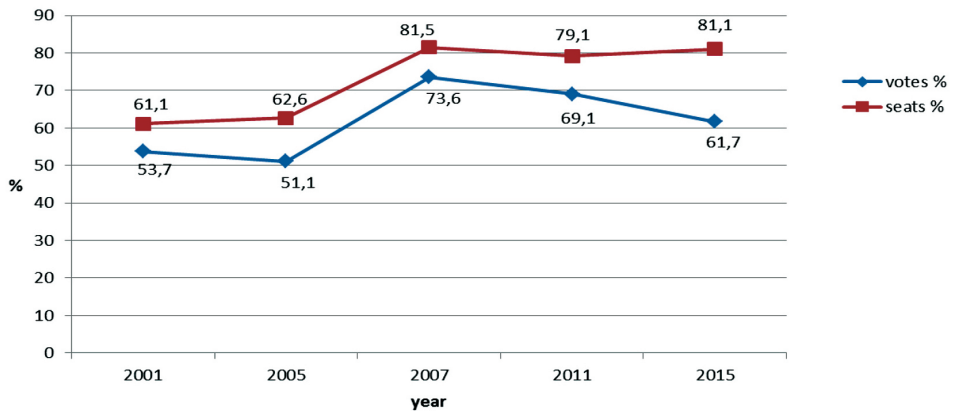
### *The level of support for the two largest parties and the patterns of electoral competition*

Surprisingly, the new parties’ entrance at the parliamentary level both in 2011 and 2015 did not cause the instability of the whole party system. The votes polled and seats share of the two largest formations have stayed almost untouched. As can be seen in Figure 4, the level of support for the two biggest parties (since 2005 these being Law and Justice and the Civic Platform) is very stable in terms of parliamentary seat numbers, reaching 81.5 % in 2007, 79.1 % in 2011 and 81.1 % in 2015.

Such a dominant position for these two parties is sometimes diagnosed as a ‘lock’ in the Polish party system or ‘duopoly’, which is the leading motive of the criticism of the newly emerging parties (Szczerbiak 2013:482). On the other hand, this duopoly seems to have been slightly changing. It is interesting to observe the figures of voters’ loyalty to those two biggest parties. In 2011 PiS was able to keep 56% of its voters from the previous elections. PO, despite the appearance of the Palikot Movement that took 8% of PO disillusioned voters, was slightly better off keeping 58% of its former voters (Cybulska 2011). In terms of the seats share PO lost in 2011 in comparison with the 2007 election

only two mandates, it had 209 seats (41.45% votes) and 207 seats (39.18% votes) respectively (see Figure 5). After the election it managed to keep itself in a coalitional government with its hitherto partner PSL.

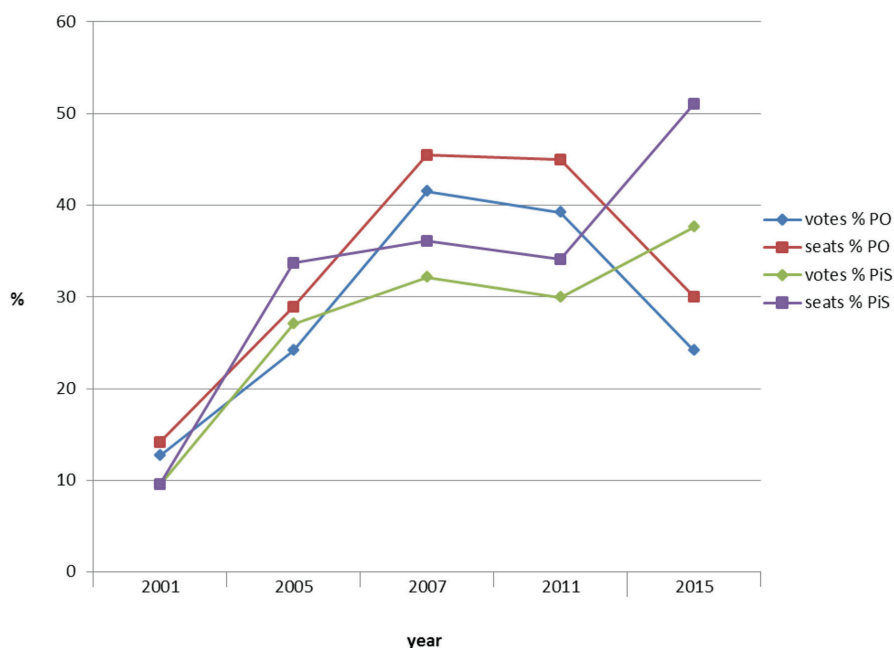
**Figure 4: Votes and seats share of two biggest parties (%) in the parliamentary elections 2001–2015**



Source: Developed by the authors on PKW data: available at <https://pkw.gov.pl> (15 December, 2018).

In 2015 the situation changed in favour of PiS. The latter kept 81% of its voters from the previous elections in 2011, while PO managed to keep only 43% of the loyal electorate (Cybulska 2015). In 2015 this party obtained merely 24.09% of votes, and 138 seats (Figure 5). It might be tempting to connect such a sharp decrease in voters’ loyalty and support of the Civic Platform with the appearance of new parties. On the one hand, it is worth remembering that in 2015 quite a large share of the previous supporters of the Civic Platform switched their votes in favour of the Modern of Ryszard Petru, as has already been discussed. On the other hand, however, it cannot be taken for granted that the former PO voters who supported the Modern of Ryszard Petru would have voted for PO if a new party had not arisen. Voters disappointed with the PO government and with scandals related to its members could well have not taken part in the election or even supported PiS. Another new formation in the 2015 election, Kukiz’15, did not take away significant portions of voters from the two leading parties, only 3% of the former voters of each (PO and PiS) decided to switch their loyalties in favour of Kukiz’15 (Cybulska 2015).

**Figure 5: Votes and seats share of PO and PiS (%) in the parliamentary elections 2001–2015**



Source: Developed by the authors on PKW data: available at <https://pkw.gov.pl> (15 December, 2018).

Employing the definition of party system by Sartori (2005) that encompasses its *format* (parties) and *mechanics* (relations between them in terms of cooperation and competition), it can be admitted that the new parties' entrance did not cause changes in the Polish party system. We would have dealt with a format change had new relevant parties appeared. Meanwhile none of the three analysed groupings can be considered relevant because none of them has a coalition or blackmail potentials<sup>11</sup>. The party system *mechanics* have also stayed untouched as the appearance of new parties did not change the patterns of party competition. Since the 2005 election the main division line remains that between PiS and PO. In 2015 some fluctuation in the support of PO occurred; however, it cannot be assumed that this trend will continue in future elections, leading towards the significant weakening of PO and as a result towards a change in the patterns of competition. All in all, new parties' entrance to the Sejm should not be considered a party system change at the parliamentary level.

<sup>11</sup> The lack of change is also visible as far as the effective number of legislative parties is concerned. In 2007 (when no new parties entered parliament) it was 2,8. In 2011 and 2015 (when new parties entered) it was 3 and 2,7 respectively (Casal Bértoa – Guerra 2016: 232).

## Conclusion

The detailed analysis of the three parties that entered the Sejm after the 2011 and 2015 elections has proven that they were genuinely new in terms of all eight criteria elaborated on by Barnea and Rahat in order to measure party newness (2011). Starting with 'party-in-the-electorate', it was confirmed that the parties have had new labels, programmes and voters. Some doubts can be highlighted only in the case of the Modern of Ryszard Petru which is sometimes perceived as 'the Civic Platform bis'. Even if it is not true in the case of the party label and programme, it must be admitted that this party has taken some voters who supported PO in the previous election. Moving on to 'party-as-organisation', it was recognised that the analysed formations have been new also in terms of their formal status, institutions and activists. They were created from scratch and registered as entirely new entities, they also (with varying results) have tried to create their own structure. Some doubts can be stated as far as their activists are concerned. Although they were supposed to attract new people, this was not always the case. Some of their activists were earlier engaged in political activity; however, with only a few exceptions, they were not known politicians and people who had not performed state functions before. Finally, 'party-in-government' was the most difficult to assess as none of the analysed parties have ever been a governing party. Two criteria placed in this dimension by Barnea and Rahat are related to the newness of party representatives (candidates) and party politics (2011). All three parties put on their electoral lists mainly non-incumbents and their representatives in the Sejm, and all of the MPs were new except for Janusz Palikot. They have tried to exert an impact on the legislative process through fostering their own initiatives, but this has usually failed as they have not had enough seats in the Sejm to win on voting matters through. Hence, even if they have proposed new policies, their influence has been very limited because they were not able to bring new topics into public discourse. To recapitulate, the research has proven that all three parties can be considered new in all the dimensions developed by Barnea and Rahat. However, it does not mean that their entrance into parliament caused any meaningful changes in the whole party system.

First of all, none of the analysed parties has had coalition or blackmail potential, hence none of them can be deemed relevant. Secondly, neither the appearance of the Palikot Movement in 2011, nor Kukiz'15 and the Modern of Ryszard Petru in 2015 influenced the patterns of electoral competition to a large extent, the main political competition is still that between PO and PiS. There was a certain fluctuation in the support for PO in 2015, which could have resulted in the longer perspective in changes to those patterns. However, the formation which caused the mentioned fluctuation seems to be losing its organisational integrity and voters' support, so it is unlikely that it will stay a relevant actor



in the next election. The conclusion that may be drawn from the above analysis is that we can observe a kind of paradox here: the three discussed formations, despite their novelty in the party system, did not bring about much change. It is due to 'the location of change' (Wolinetz 1979, Mair 1990) and 'the extent of change' (Mair 1990). New parties have been located on the margin of the main line of political competition and have not been able to create any new cleavage. In addition, 'the extent of change' has been insignificant because of newcomers' lack of coalition and blackmail potential. To sum up, the Polish party system has been divided into two subsystems: one of established parties and one of new ones (Haughton – Deegan-Krause 2015). Whereas the former has stayed stable, the latter has changed as parties that have emerged quickly have also quickly disappeared (Mair 1990); however, the location of the changes means that they do not affect the whole party system that seems to be secure despite the occurring changes.

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